

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1825

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, UR, US

SUBJECT: MFA COMPLAINT ABOUT RADIO LIBERTY

1. MFA USA DIVISION DEPUTY DIRECTOR KOMPLEKTOV, FOLLOWING PROTEST ON "DIALOGUE" TO DCM FEBRUARY 10 (SEPTTEL), COMPLAINED ORALLY THAT RADIO LIBERTY TRANSMITS ANTI-SOVIET MATERIAL, TO WHICH THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT HAS REPEATEDLY CALLED US ATTENTION. KOMPLEKTOV SAID THAT THE COUNCIL WHICH RUNS RADIO LIBERTY IS FUNDED FROM THE FEDERAL BUDGET AND IS, THEREFORE, A FEDERAL AGENCY. HE TURNED TO CHETVERIKOV, CHIEF OF THE DIVISION'S BILATERAL SECTION, WHO SAID SPECIFICALLY THAT RADIO LIBERTY WAS MAKING SLANDEROUS STATEMENTS ON THE NATIONALITY QUESTION IN THE SOVIET UNION, STATEMENTS WHICH SOUGHT TO COMPLICATE RELATIONS BETWEEN VARIOUS REPUBLICS AND BETWEEN DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES. CHETVERIKOV CONTINUED THAT RADIO LIBERTY HAD BEEN CRITICAL OF LENIN ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND OF CURRENT SOVIET LEADERS AS WELL. PICKING UP THE THEME, KOMPLEKTOV CITED THE UKRAINE AND CENTRAL ASIA AS FOCI FOR SUCH "SLANDERS." HE SAID THAT THEY HAD EVOKED INDIGNATION AMONG THE SOVIET PEOPLE, WHO ASKED HOW SUCH THINGS COULD BE BROADCAST WHEN THE U.S. LEADERS SPEAK OF THEIR DESIRE FOR BETTER BILATERAL RELATIONS. HE NOTED THAT, WHILE THIS WAS NOT AN OFFICIAL PROTEST, THE BEHAVIOR OF RADIO LIBERTY DID NOT CORRESPOND TO IMPROVED BILATERAL RELATIONS AND MEASURES SHOULD BE TAKEN TO CURB THE ABUSE CITED.

2. DCM REMARKED IN RESPONSE THAT THE COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING IS AN INDEPENDENT BODY, CREATED AND FINANCED BY
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CONGRESS, AND THAT THE OPERATION OF THE RADIO STATION IS SOLELY

UNDER THE CONTROL OF THAT COMMISSION AND NOT SUBJECT TO THE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY GUIDANCE. DCM ADDED THAT HE COULD NOT ACCEPT KOMPLEKTOV'S DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARACTER OF THE TRANSMISSIONS, NOTING THAT IT IS OF COURSE IMPOSSIBLE FOR US HERE TO BE AWARE OF THE CONTENT OF RADIO LIBERTY BROADCASTS BECAUSE OF JAMING. HE PROMISED, HOWEVER, TO CONVEY KOMPLEKTOV'S VIEWS TO WASHINGTON.

3. KOMPLEKTOV CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT HE DID NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT'S RAISING THE COMPLAINT ABOUT RADIO LIBERTY ON THE OFFICIAL LEVEL.

4. COMMENT: SINCE KOMPLEKTOV'S COMMENT WAS CLEARLY TAGGED UNOFFICIAL, THERE WOULD SEEM LITTLE POINT IN REPLYING.

5. DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS USIA AND MUNICH.
STOESSEL

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED USIA, MUNICH.

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